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SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND AND UNITED KINGDOM COLLABORATE ON RENEWABLE ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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¶1. (U) Summary. In February, the British High Commission (BHC) in New Zealand and the NZ Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MoRST), organized a visit to New Zealand by a party of UK energy specialists. The purpose of the visit, funded the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), was to develop bilateral collaboration between the UK and NZ in research and development of wind and ocean wave/tidal energy resources. To help coordinate this event, the BHC created the position of Science and Innovation Promoter in mid-2007 to promote links between UK and NZ research and technology institutions. Collaboration potential emerged in several areas, including both research and commercial development projects. In March, a follow up meeting is planned in Auckland to discuss UK-NZ collaboration on biofuel research and development initiatives. Post is conveying this information to keep interested parties apprised of renewable energy developments in New Zealand and the UK as we consider new bilateral initiatives in this area. End Summary.

New Zealand and UK Energy Experts Meet

¶2. (U) On February 2-6, eleven visiting UK energy specialists met with representatives from NZ's academic, government and energy production sectors. In total, nearly 100 people attended the four-day conference, which included field site visits, research laboratory tours, as well as seminars and presentations. Their announced objectives included:

- bringing together research providers and users in key areas of strategic importance to both countries;
- taking advantage of opposite NZ and UK seasons (but similar weather patterns) to accelerate research;
- enhancing joint climate change and energy security goals (by promoting a rapid transition to a sustainable low carbon, global economy and access to clean, secure and affordable energy supplies);
- identifying and stimulating commercial interaction between the UK and NZ in the areas of wind and water energy supply technologies, carbon sequestration, and energy efficiency in commercial and private usage; and
- taking advantage of NZ's positive role within the region and international fora to influence coherent climate change mitigation policies.

¶3. (U) UK participants included representatives from Garrad Hassan, Progressive Energy, Eureka Heat Recovery, Ocean Power Technologies, Glasgow Caledonian, Focus Offshore, Isis Innovation/Oxford, and Thermo-d.demon. Several academics in the field of renewable energy from Oxford, Edinburgh University, and Nottingham University also participated. The UK Renewable Energy Association advertised and organized the UK participation, while the New Zealand Energy Federation arranged the meetings and program in New Zealand. Assisting in New Zealand to organize the program and meeting schedule were the Aotearoa Wave and Tidal Energy Association and Meridian Energy. The New Zealand academic communities from Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch also participated, as did a number of NZ companies and energy associations.

¶4. (U) While no agreements were finalized during the meeting, the discussions did result in several outcomes:

-- The possible installation of three ocean energy demonstration projects, to include a wave generator unit and a tidal generator unit. Both Isis Innovation/Oxford and Ocean Power Technologies discussed the possible deployment of demonstration units for tidal power technology in New Zealand. Ocean Navitas UK (represented by Smart Energy Ltd) proposed the establishment of a marine wave generator in the next two years in collaboration with a number of NZ entities.

-- The transfer of technical information relating to ocean energy devices;

-- New Zealand collaboration in Smart (electricity) Meter technology now being commercialized by an Oxford University spin-off company (ISE); and

-- Collaboration in several areas of energy research and energy

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efficiency.

¶5. (U) The parties announced their intent to follow up with written agreements to include provisions governing IP discovery and use, and sales or purchase of IP or other products resulting from the relationship. Further discussions between the UK and NZ will occur on March 9-12 in Auckland, when the parties will focus on biofuel energy sources.

¶6. (U) Comment: Post is conveying this information to keep interested parties apprised of renewable energy developments in New Zealand and the UK as we consider new bilateral initiatives in this area. End Comment.

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